



RICK SHAEFER: The Refugee Trilogy

A Monumental Response to the Refugee Crisis
at Fairfield University Art Museum's Walsh Gallery



Rick Shaefer, *Water Crossing*, 2016. Charcoal on vellum. 96 x 165 inches.
Photo courtesy of the artist.

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

The Fairfield University Art Museum is pleased to present the inaugural exhibition of a monumental new series by artist Rick Shaefer created in response to the ongoing refugee crisis convulsing the globe. This three-piece suite is comprised of *Land Crossing*, dealing with the migration across foreign lands; *Water Crossing*, addressing the perilous journeys of refugees who take to the open seas; and *Border Crossing*, spotlighting the hostilities refugees face in seeking safe haven far from a violence-torn homeland. The trilogy employs the artistic lexicon of old master painting (specifically incorporating heroic figurative elements from works by Rubens and Géricault) to explore this contemporary crisis in a language both familiar and iconic. Such historical allusions underscore the tenacious persistence of this epic human tragedy throughout time, past and present.

In addition to the three triptychs, each executed in charcoal on vellum, the exhibition includes seventeen of Shaefer's preparatory drawings for the series.

Exhibition Programming: This exhibition lends itself to multiple avenues of programming. Programs planned at Fairfield University in conjunction with this exhibition include an opening night lecture, "Rubens and the Art of Appropriation," by Stijn Alsteens, Curator, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; a panel discussion, "The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Over Land and Sea," with Dr. Silvia Marsans-Sakly, Assistant Professor of History, Islamic World, Julie Whittaker '12, Founder, Amal Foundation (dedicated to providing higher education scholarships for refugees in their host communities), Wendy Christian, Associate Vice President, Marketing and Communication, Save the Children USA, and artist Rick Shaefer; a lecture by Dr. Lisa Brody, Yale University, "Dura-Europos: Exploring and Preserving Cultural Heritage in Roman Syria"; and a film screening of *Salam Neighbor* followed by a Skype conversation with the film's director, Chris Temple. An Artists Talk with Rick Shaefer and innovative South African playwright Brett Bailey, whose new work in progress, "Anctuary," is also a response to the current refugee crisis, completes the program.

Mobile App: Audio clips were created by refugee and relocated youth, and their teachers, who found inspiration in Shaefer's work. The participating students attended the Ubuntu Academy, a summer literacy lab hosted by the Connecticut Writing Project at Fairfield University that brings teachers and students together to write. Listen to our mobile app at cuseum.com/fuam.



Rick Shaefer, in his studio, *Land Crossing*, 2016. Charcoal on vellum. 96 x 165 inches (triptych).
Photo courtesy of the artist.



Rick Shaefer, detail of lower panel, *Border Crossing*, 2016. Charcoal on vellum.
Photo courtesy of the artist.

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Artist: Rick Shaefer (<http://www.rickshaefer.com/>)

Curator: Dr. Linda Wolk-Simon, Frank and Clara Meditz Director and Chief Curator, Fairfield University Art Museum

Organized by: Carey Mack Weber, Assistant Director, Fairfield University Art Museum

Address: The Walsh Gallery of the Fairfield University Art Museum, located in the Quick Center for the Arts on the campus of Fairfield University at 200 Barlow Road, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Linear feet: 120+ feet

Security: Medium

Fee/Shipping: \$5,000 plus incoming and outgoing fine art shipping, along with wall-to-wall insurance

Number of works: 20, 3 charcoal drawings (triptychs) vellum mounted on wood, 17 framed drawings

Venues: Fairfield University Art Museum, Walsh Gallery: September 7 – October 22, 2016, Brigham Young University Art Museum, May-November 2018. Availability – Spring, Summer, Fall 2017, Spring 2018, 2019 and beyond.

Curricular connections: Arab Studies, Current Affairs, Communication & Media Studies, Drawing, History, Humanitarian Studies, Islamic Studies, International Affairs/Relations, Painting, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, World Literature, Art History

Contact information: Carey Mack Weber, cweber@fairfield.edu, 203-254-4000 ext. 2499

Recent press:

Venü Magazine: <https://issuu.com/venumagazine/docs/venu32> (pages 52-55)

Hartford Courant: <http://www.courant.com/entertainment/museums-galleries/hc-0914-refugee-trilogy-fairfield-20160913-story.html>

Stamford Advocate: <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/entertainment/article/Shaefer-s-Refugee-Trilogy-debuts-with-9187006.php>



RICK SHAEFER: The Refugee Trilogy, Fairfield University Art Museum, Opening Reception, 2016.

Checklist:

1. *Border Crossing*, 2015-2016
Charcoal on vellum
95 x 165 inches
2. *Water Crossing*, 2016
Charcoal on vellum
95 x 165 inches
3. *Land Crossing*, 2016
Charcoal on vellum
96 x 170 inches
4. Compositional Drawing for
Water Crossing, 2016
Charcoal on vellum mounted on paper
40 x 66 inches
5. Compositional Drawing for
Land Crossing, 2016
Charcoal on vellum mounted on paper
40 x 66 inches
6. Horse and Rider with Tiger
(*Land Crossing*), 2016
Charcoal on vellum mounted on paper
40 x 44 inches
7. Three Heads Study
(*Land Crossing*), 2016
Charcoal on vellum mounted on paper
24 x 36 inches
8. Angel Study
(*Border Crossing*), 2015
Charcoal on vellum mounted on paper
40 x 32 inches
9. Pietà Study
(*Water Crossing*), 2016
Charcoal on vellum mounted on paper
30 x 28 inches
10. Two Torsos Study
(*Border Crossing*), 2015
Charcoal on paper
28 x 44 inches
11. Reclining Male Study
(*Water Crossing*), 2016
Charcoal on paper
28 x 42 inches
12. Male from Back Study
(*Border Crossing*), 2015
Cartoon, charcoal on paper
28 x 38 inches
13. Lion with Leg (*Land Crossing*), 2016
Cartoon, charcoal and acrylic on vellum
mounted on paper
30 x 24 inches
14. Preliminary Rough Composition Sketch
For *Border Crossing*, 2015
Charcoal on paper
22 x 32 inches
15. Storm Sketch (*Water Crossing*), 2016
Charcoal on paper
32 x 42 inches
16. Final Composition Drawing
(*Land Crossing*), 2016
Giclée print with drawn overlays
24 x 38 inches
17. Angel Study with Hands
(*Border Crossing*), 2015
Graphite on paper
34 x 24 inches
18. Original Thumbnail for
Land Crossing, 2016
Pencil on paper
11 x 14 inches
19. Original Thumbnail for
Water Crossing, 2016
Pencil on paper
11 x 14 inches
20. Lion Study for
Border Crossing, 2015
Charcoal and white crayon
on craft paper
19 x 26 inches